

Dear Gavin D37 Parents/Guardians,

I hope this email finds you well. My intent here is to provide you with a short update on where we are at with the start of school.

Two weeks ago, our Board approved a school calendar which includes an opportunity for students to start in a blended/hybrid model. And as you know, parents also have a choice to register their students for a full remote learning environment. Our team has spent countless hours over the past two weeks trying to navigate the logistics and scheduling in order to meet as many scheduling needs for our students and families as possible.

The Illinois State Board of Education is pushing us to get kids in school. And trust me, we want nothing more than to have all of our kids here on campus as soon as possible. However, the guidelines from ISBE, the CDC, and the Illinois Department of Public Health continue to be adjusted with shifting clarification. Many of the requirements they are putting forth are making it increasingly difficult for us to get students and staff back on campus. Here is a short summary of a few of the roadblocks we are trying to navigate at this time:

- Quarantine guidelines are going to cause significant disruption daily. We have yet to receive an official “decision tree” guidance from Lake County Health Department in regards to who/when to quarantine. Since their information from the CDC continues to be adjusted, they have also had to adjust their guidance documents for us. I was told on Friday to anticipate this information sometime this week.
  - In local summer school examples, schools were dealing with quarantine issues on a daily basis among staff and students. This was just with small numbers of students on campus. We are fearful of the disruption that will be caused to everyone when we have large numbers of students/staff on campus daily.
  - As quarantine becomes an issue, we will quickly be short in the number of adults available to fill needed roles on campus. Even in a classroom with desks 6 ft apart in a cohort of kids where adults rotate in to teach, one case could take out all those students and up to 7 staff members.
- It was shared this week by the Lake County Health Department that any student or staff member who has one of the [symptoms for COVID-19](#) will be required to provide either a negative COVID test or a doctor note to return. This will be a huge hurdle for families and staff, as the list of symptoms includes symptoms of other common illnesses. This requirement alone is going to cause massive disruption to the attendance of staff and students.
- There are increasing infection rates in Lake County, which has pushed the county into a “warning” status.
- It was clarified with me on Friday by the Lake County Health Department that if we can't maintain 6ft social distancing at all times then alternate plans need to be

developed. Prior guidance said to maintain the 6ft. "If possible". Given this new clarification, we are having trouble guaranteeing this will happen at all times.

- Rates in Wisconsin continue to increase. It is likely that they will be added to the mandatory quarantine list. We have several staff who live in Wisconsin.
- The daily screening of all students continues to be an issue that we are trying to address as to how to best handle. To assure that every student has been screened before they get onto a bus is not an easy situation to resolve.

Again, we are giving every effort we can right now to preparing for students to be on our campus in some form. We have invested thousands of dollars in protective health equipment and supplies and have been problem solving the hundreds of logistical issues that must be problem-solved. We want our kids here because we know that educationally and socially that is what is best for them.

I share this with you in an effort to be honest and transparent regarding the issues we are trying to work through. I am sure you are seeing in the local news reports that many of the Lake County school districts are shifting to a full remote learning environment to start the school year. If any changes to our current blended/hybrid return to school plan are to be made, I anticipate having a decision by the end of the week so that there is time for proper planning for everyone. Please know that it is in the forefront of my mind the impact that our decision making has on our parents and staff and the stress that I am sure this is causing. Please stay tuned this week as we try to work through more details.

Julie Brua  
Superintendent

Gavin D37 School District